

BEFORE THE PERSONNEL APPEALS BOARD

STATE OF WASHINGTON

DON TARBERT,	)	
	)	
Appellant,	)	Case No. ALLO-02-0016
	)	
v.	)	
	)	ORDER OF THE BOARD FOLLOWING
	)	HEARING ON EXCEPTIONS TO THE
CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY,	)	DETERMINATIONS OF THE DIRECTOR
	)	
Respondent.	)	

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**Hearing on Exceptions.** Pursuant to RCW 41.64.060 and WAC 358-01-040, this appeal came on for hearing before the Personnel Appeals Board, GERALD L. MORGEN, Vice Chair. The hearing was held on October 1, 2002, at the Central Washington University in Ellensburg, Washington. RENÉ EWING, Member, reviewed the record and participated in the decision in this matter. WALTER T. HUBBARD, Chair, did not participate in the hearing or in the decision in this matter.

**Appearances.** Appellant Don Tarbert was present and represented himself *pro se*. Dennis Defa, Assistant Director of Human Resources, represented Respondent Central Washington University (CWU).

**Background.** As a result of a class study, the Washington State Personnel Resources Board adopted revisions to the higher education information technology classes. Appellant's position was reviewed by CWU's internal position audit team, which recommended that Appellant's position be allocated to the Information Technology Systems Specialist III classification. Subsequently, a CWU peer review team reviewed Appellant's position and concurred with the recommendation. CWU Human Resources staff also agreed with the recommendation and Appellant's position was allocated to the Information Technology Systems Specialist III classification, effective January 1,

1 2002. Appellant was notified of the allocation of his position by letter dated December 19, 2001  
2 from Dennis Defa.

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4 On January 3, 2002, Appellant appealed to the Director of the Department of Personnel (DOP). In  
5 his letter of appeal, Appellant requested that his position be reallocated to the Information  
6 Technology Systems Specialist IV classification.

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8 The Director's designee, Kari Lade, conducted an allocation review of Appellant's position and  
9 forwarded the results of her review to Teri Thompson, Director of Classification and Compensation.  
10 By letter dated May 20, 2002, Ms. Thompson notified Appellant that his position was properly  
11 allocated to the Information Technology Systems Specialist III classification. On June 17, 2002,  
12 Appellant filed exceptions to the Director's determination with the Personnel Appeals Board.  
13 Appellant's exceptions are the subject of this proceeding.

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15 Appellant works in the Plant Operations unit of CWU's Facilities Management Department (FMD).  
16 Appellant is a member of the FMD team that provides senior-level technical support for a complex  
17 network of campus-wide building information systems. Appellant's duties include designing  
18 systems, installing, testing, troubleshooting, and maintaining hardware, software, and network  
19 infrastructure equipment. Appellant works independently to carry out his assignments. Appellant's  
20 assignments impact individual buildings on campus, however, if a system fails, adjacent buildings  
21 may be impacted. Appellant works under the direction of the Manager of Plant Operations who set  
22 policies and objectives, and he has the overall responsibility for the plant operations network  
23 systems.

24  
25 **Summary of Appellant's Argument.** Appellant argues that he is a senior-level technical support  
26 specialist and is responsible for a mission-critical, complex, multifunctional campus-wide system.

1 Appellant argues that he works under administrative direction to design, troubleshoot and resolve  
2 problems, and that he independently carries out his assignments in accordance with broad policy  
3 statements. Appellant contends that the fire alarm and building automation systems are highly  
4 regulated and extensively networked and that he is required to perform his work in accordance with  
5 the laws and regulations governing such systems. Appellant contends that his position should be  
6 allocated to the Information Technology Systems Specialist IV classification.

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8 **Summary of Respondent's Argument.** Respondent contends that the Director's determination is  
9 supported by a preponderance of the evidence and is consistent with the findings of CWU's internal  
10 review committees and the decision of human resources staff. Respondent asserts that Appellant's  
11 position is properly allocated to the Information Technology Systems Specialist III classification.

12  
13 **Primary Issue.** Whether the Director's determination that Appellant's position was properly  
14 allocated to the Information Technology Systems Specialist III classification should be affirmed.

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16 **Relevant Classifications.** Information Technology Systems Specialist III, class code 2407;  
17 Information Technology Systems Specialist IV, class code 2408.

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19 **Decision of the Board.** The purpose of a position review is to determine which classification best  
20 describes the overall duties and responsibilities of a position. A position review is neither a  
21 measurement of the volume of work performed nor an evaluation of the expertise with which that  
22 work is performed. Also, a position review is not a comparison of work performed by employees in  
23 similar positions. A position review is a comparison of the duties and responsibilities of a particular  
24 position to the available classification specifications. This review results in a determination of the  
25 class which best describes the overall duties and responsibilities of the position. Liddle-Stamper v.  
26 Washington State University, PAB Case No. 3722-A2 (1994).

1  
2 Positions allocated to the Information Technology Systems Specialist (ITSS) IV classification  
3 function as senior-level specialists and independently utilize advanced technical knowledge on  
4 projects that impact major work groups or multiple functional areas. Generally, ITSS IVs serve as  
5 team or project leaders or supervise staff. ITSS IVs independently plan, design and carry out  
6 projects and their work is evaluated in terms of its adherence to program goals or compliance with  
7 laws, regulations or general institution policies. Appellant's position does not meet the level of  
8 independence or breadth of impact intended by this classification. We recognize that Appellant has  
9 20 years of experience in his field and is a highly capable employee. However, allocation of a  
10 position is not based on an employee's expertise or ability. Rather, allocation of a position looks at  
11 the duties and responsibilities assigned to a position in comparison to the available classifications.  
12 In this case, Appellant's supervisor maintains overall responsibility for the plant operations systems  
13 and ensures adherence to program goals or compliance with laws, regulations or general institution  
14 policies. Appellant works as a member of the FMD team providing independent, specialist  
15 technical support for campus-wide building information systems. The scope of Appellant's work  
16 does not impact the business functions of other major work groups or multiple functional areas. For  
17 example, if the heating and cooling system in a building is not operating properly, the university's  
18 business and educational functions are not affected, albeit, the staff and students may be physically  
19 uncomfortable. Appellant's work is limited to environmental control systems and the life-safety  
20 system, which does not meet the breadth of impact anticipated at the ITSS IV level.

21  
22 Positions allocated to the Information Technology Systems Specialist III classification work  
23 independently, consult with users, complete assignments and coordinate projects, and resolve  
24 problems. ITSS IIIs have a moderate scope of responsibility and their work impacts internal or  
25 satellite operations, multiple users, or more than one group. At this level, complex problems are  
26 resolved by consulting with a higher level such as a higher-level specialist, supervisor or technical

1 consultant. In addition, ITSS IIIs may lead and mentor other staff. Appellant works independently  
2 under the general direction of his supervisor. Appellant's supervisor sets the overall goals and  
3 objectives for the work unit. Appellant's work involves internal operations and affects more than  
4 one building and more than one group. Appellant occasionally serves as the lead staff person on  
5 projects and he consults with other team members or vendors to resolve unusual or complex  
6 problems. The overall scope and complexity of Appellant's duties and responsibilities and his level  
7 of independence fit the ITSS III classification.

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9 **Conclusion.** Appellant's appeal on exceptions should be denied and Director's determination, dated  
10 May 20, 2002, should be affirmed and adopted.

11 **ORDER**

12 NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the appeal of Don Tarbert is denied and the  
13 Director's determination dated May 20, 2002, is affirmed and adopted.

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15 DATED this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2002.

16 WASHINGTON STATE PERSONNEL APPEALS BOARD

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Gerald L. Morgen, Vice, Chair

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René Ewing, Member